

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of playing a video poker game including the following:

- a) providing a pay schedule to a player used to award winnings;
- b) allowing the player to make a wager to participate in the play of the game;
- c) displaying an initial hand of random cards to a player;
- d) allowing the player to discard any unwanted cards, if any, and dealing replacement cards for the discarded cards so that a final hand is established;
- e) determining whether the final hand is a winning or losing hand;
- f) paying the player a pre-established amount based on the amount of the wager and the pay schedule if the final hand is a winning hand.

2. The method of claim 1 including the steps of:

- a) providing a bonus pay schedule to the player used to award bonus winnings.
- b) displaying random bonus items to the player when the initial hand is displayed;
- c) comparing the final hand to the bonus items and determining if any bonus is awarded.
- d) paying the player a pre-established amount based on the amount of the wager and the bonus pay schedule.

3. A method of defining a bonus cycle including the steps of:

- a) defining the start of a bonus cycle when the first wager is made and no bonus cycle is currently active.
- b) selecting a set of random bonus items at the beginning of the bonus cycle;
- c) displaying these bonus items to all players participating in the bonus cycle;
- d) determining if any player has satisfied the conditions to end the bonus cycle.
- e) if conditions have been met, ending the bonus cycle.

4. The methods of claim 1 and claim 3 including the steps of:

- a) providing a bonus pay schedule used to award bonus winnings to each player.
- b) providing a bank to which bonus winnings are paid and from which bonus winnings are awarded.
- c) displaying the bonus items for the current bonus cycle to each player when each player's initial hand is displayed;
- d) comparing each player's final hand to the bonus items and determining if any bonus is awarded.
- e) comparing the final hand of each player to the bonus items and qualifying the bonus items for each player that match cards in that player's final hand.
- f) paying the player a percentage of the pre-established amount based on the amount of the wager and the bonus pay schedule.
- g) paying the bank the remaining amount of the award from claim 4f.

h) determining if any player has qualified all bonus items, paying a bonus from the bank, and ending the bonus cycle.

5. The method of claim 2 in which the bonus items are represented as a secondary hand of cards.

6. The method of claim 2 in which the bonus items are represented as five numbered items. The set of numbers from which the value of the bonus items are assigned is also used to assign a unique numerical value to each card.

7. The method of claim 4 in which the bonus items are represented as a secondary hand of cards.

8. The method of claim 4 in which the bonus items are represented as five numbered items. The set of numbers from which the value of the bonus items are assigned is also used to assign a unique numerical value to each card.